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CREED HOSTS ALL-ISLAND CIVIC DIALOGUE FOR THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

Minister of State Doyle engages with horticulture and forestry sectors

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD and Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Andrew Doyle TD today hosted All-Island civic dialogue to discuss the implications of Brexit for the agri-food sector. Following on from earlier dialogues in December and just last week which examined issues for the beef, dairy, sheep, pigs, poultry and fisheries sectors, today's event considered the implications for the forestry, prepared consumer foods, horticulture and cereals/animal feed sectors.

Speaking after the event, which took place in Gormanston, Co. Meath, the Minister referred to the comprehensive consultations that had taken place in recent weeks: *"I have been delighted with the response of the agri-food sector, both north and south, to this all-island initiative, which has allowed us to discuss in some detail the implications of Brexit for the sector and the potential responses that will be required as the negotiations unfold. We again had a very strong turnout today, and a very positive and constructive engagement from all concerned."*

As with previous dialogues, the discussions today covered a range of issues, including the short-term effects of the ongoing uncertainty, and the longer-term challenges posed by potential changes in the areas of tariffs and trade, regulations and standards, and border controls and certification.

Minister of State Doyle welcomed in particular the opportunity to engage further with representatives of the horticulture and forestry sectors, saying: *“I am acutely aware of the particular challenges that Brexit presents for the horticulture and forestry sectors given their unique exposure to the UK market. Today’s discussions are an integral part of the Government’s efforts to ensure that their concerns are fully understood and taken on board.”*

Concluding, Minister Creed emphasised the very worthwhile contribution the day’s proceedings had made to his own and to his Department’s preparations for Brexit, and looked forward to the discussions being reflected in the next full plenary of the All Island Civic Dialogue, which takes place in Dublin Castle on 17 February.

He said *“I want to thank today’s participants and those in the earlier dialogues for their very positive contributions to what have been very engaging discussions, and I look forward to further engagement with stakeholders as the process unfolds over the coming months.”*

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